July 30, 1998

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD – SENATE

S9489

(A) discrimination on the basis of gender; and
(B) deprivation of human rights of women; and
(calls on all Afghan parties in particular to take measures to ensure—
(A) the effective participation of women in civil, economic, political, and social life throughout the country;
(B) the right of women and girls to an education without discrimination, reopening schools to women and girls at all levels of education;
(D) respect for the right of women to physical security;
(E) those responsible for physical attacks on women are brought to justice;
(F) respect for freedom of movement of women and their effective access to healthcare; and
(G) equal access of women to health facilities;
(7) supports the work of nongovernmental organizations advocating respect for human rights in Afghanistan and an improvement in the status of women and their access to humanitarian and development assistance and programs;
(8) calls on the international community to provide, on a nondiscriminatory basis, adequate humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in neighboring countries pending their voluntary repatriation, and requests all parties in Afghanistan to lift the restrictions imposed or placed on the provision of aid and to cease any action which may prevent or impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance;
(9) welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Lakhdir Brahimi as special envoy of the United Nations Secretary General for Afghanistan, and encourages United Nations efforts to produce a durable peace in Afghanistan consistent with the goal of a broad-based national government respectful of human rights; and
(10) calls on all warring parties, factions, and powers to participate with Ambassador Brahimi in an intra-Afghan dialogue regarding the peace process.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL ACTION BY PRESIDENT.

It is the sense of Congress that the President and Secretary of State should—
(A) work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the international community to—
(A) guarantee the safety of, and provide international development assistance for, Afghan women’s groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan;
(B) increase support for refugee programs in Pakistan that provide assistance to Afghan women and children with an emphasis on health, education, and income-generating programs; and
(C) explore options for the resettlement of those Afghan women, particularly war widows and their families, who are under threat or who fear for their safety or the safety of their offspring;
(2) establish an Afghanistan Women’s Initiative, based on the successful model of the Bosnian Women’s Initiative and the Rwandan Women’s Initiative, that is targeted at Afghan women’s groups, in order to—
(A) facilitate organization among Afghan women’s groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan;
(B) provide humanitarian and development services to the women and the families most in need; and
(C) promote women’s economic security;
(3) make a policy determination that—
(A) recognition of any government in Afghanistan by the United States should depend, among other things, on the human rights policies towards women adopted by that government;
(B) the United States should not recognize any government which systematically maltreats women; and
(C) any nonemergency economic or development assistance shall be based on respect for human rights; and
(4) call for the creation of—
(A) an international commission to establish legal and criminal culpability of any individual or party in Afghanistan employing rape or other crimes against humanity considered a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions of 1949; and in war and invasion;
(B) an ad hoc international criminal tribunal by the United Nations for the purposes of indicting, prosecuting, and imprisoning any individual responsible for crimes against humanity in Afghanistan.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State submit a report to Congress not later than 6 months after the date of the adoption of this resolution regarding actions that have been taken to implement this resolution.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1385 to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States, and for other purposes.

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1385), have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by a majority of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The report will be stated.

The legislative clerk as follows:
The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the Record of July 29, 1998.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be adopted, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and other statements relating to this conference report be printed in the Record.

Before you proceed, Mr. President, I believe the Senator from Ohio would like to make some comments, and I invite him to do so.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I thank the chairman of the committee, Senator Jeffords, for yielding to me and thank him also for the tremendous work he has done on this bill. He has been working on this for a number of years. This is the culmination of a great deal of work.

We are about to pass the conference report. Once the bill is sent on to the President, I believe the Senator from Ohio would like to make some comments, and I invite him to do so.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent that I, the Senate, by unanimous consent, do not proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the Record of July 29, 1998.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be adopted, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and other statements relating to this conference report be printed in the Record.

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Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I thank the chairman of the committee, Senator Jeffords, for yielding to me and thank him also for the tremendous work he has done on this bill. He has been working on this for a number of years. This is the culmination of a great deal of work.

We are about to pass the conference report. Once the bill is sent on to the President and signed by the President, it will represent a major accomplishment. This bill consolidates over 70 federally funded job training-related programs—over 70 of them consolidated. This bill will make job training, federally funded job training, in this country much more accountable. It will also involve the business community much more in the development and design of job training.

The one thing Chairman Jeffords and I have learned from the hearings held on this matter over the years is that if you want job training to work, it has to be run locally and it has to have great input from the local business community. This bill will make sure that we have that. We have to have local people. We have to have local business people who are involved in the design of the job training.

That is what this bill does. This bill also dramatically reforms Job Corps. Job Corps is a Great Society-era job training program, residential, that is run by the Federal Government. It costs over $1 billion a year. It is targeted at our most at-risk young people in this country, people who desperately need help, desperately need assistance. What this bill does is make sure that $1 billion will be correctly spent. And again, we do that by measuring the results.

One of the things that Chairman Jeffords and I, the Senator from Ohio, were shocked about when we held hearings several years ago on this—actually former Senator Kassebaum was chairman—was that Job Corps did not really measure success or failure of the young people. It didn’t measure the success or failure of a particular job training program. They looked at it and saw whether or not a person had a job for 2 weeks. If they kept a job for 2 weeks after graduation from the program, that, they didn’t matter what the job was—the program was considered a success. The contractor who was in charge of getting that person a job got paid, and then no one ever looked back.

What we do with this bill is say we are going to measure success or failure after 6 months. We are going to measure success or failure after 12 months. And then we are going to be able to tell which programs work and which do not work in regard to Job Corps.

Another change we are making in Job Corps is to involve the local business community. Too often Job Corps has herded young people from 500, 600, 700 miles a way. They go to the Job Corps. They stay there for awhile, they get a job, they go back home, and it is very difficult to involve the local business community when they know that person is not going to be there to work for them. And so we change those priorities in regard to Job Corps as well.

We also in this bill make a major step forward to link the regular job training programs of this country with
vocational rehabilitation. We do that by closing the gap. We do that by preserving the dedicated flow of money that will go for this targeted population, targeted population that is in need of our assistance, who wants to help themselves, who wants to acquire a dedicated fund, those dedicated funds. But we give that recipient, that client, more resources. We empower that client to go to the vocational rehabilitation site or, if the services are not there, to make sure that the client has the legal right to go across the street or across the county, wherever that is, to get help and assistance from the regular system as well. It integrates the two.

In conclusion, let me say this bill is a bill for workers. It is a bill for people who want to be workers. It is a bill for young people. It is a bill that literally empowers the person who is seeking the job training. It gives them more, many more rights. It gives them a lot more flexibility. It puts them into the ball game as far as choosing what is the job training that is best for them. So it makes a significant difference.

This bill also has a very significant component aimed directly at children. We set aside a significant sum of money for those young people between the ages of 14 and 21. We do it; we target it; we say it is important. There is nothing, I think, more important in this country than what we do with our young people and the assistance we try to provide for them. We have many young people in this country who we call at-risk youth. This bill will go a long way to give them direct assistance. However, even though we target it in this bill and say these funds are dedicated for these young people, we also say it is dedicated for these young people. It is dedicated for these young people in their local communities. States and local communities to allow them to design the specific program that will actually work for their young people in their local communities.

This is a very significant bill. It is a bill that dramatically changes the status quo. It is a bipartisan bill. It is a bill that Senator WELLSTONE worked on with me in the subcommittee. It is a bill on which Senator KENNEDY worked with Senator JEFFORDS. It is a bill that Secretary Alexis Herman has been very, very much involved in. She has been involved in it up until the last 10 minutes, as we have negotiated the final portions of this bill.

So, it is a bipartisan bill. It is a bill we can all be very proud of. It is a bill that will truly make a difference for our young people and for those who need to be trained in this country.

Agreed to by chairman for the tremendous work that he has done; for his persistence. One of the qualities I think you have to have in the U.S. Senate is perseverance and persistence, as well as patience. He has demonstrated all three.

The culmination of what we see tonight, which is a bill we are about to send to the President of the United States for his signature.
of our current job training system. He has consistently emphasized the need for greater individual choice in the selection of career paths and training providers. The philosophy behind his skill grant proposal is reflected in our legislation.

The Workforce Investment Act is designed to provide easy access to state of the art employment training programs which are geared to real job opportunities in the community through a single, customer-friendly system of One Stop Career Centers. Over 700 such Centers are already operating successfully across the country. This legislation will ensure that every individual in need of employment services will have access to such a facility. The cornerstones of this new system are individual choice and quality labor market information. In the past, men and women seeking new careers often did not know what job skills were most in demand and which training programs had the best chance for success. Too often, they were forced to make one of the most important decisions of their lives based on anecdotes and late-night advertisements.

No job training system can function effectively without accurate and timely information. The frequent unavailability of quality labor market information is one of the most serious flaws in the current system. This legislation places a strong emphasis on providing accurate and timely information about what area industries are growing, what skills those jobs require, and what earning potential they have. Extensive business community and organized labor participation are encouraged in developing a regional plan based on this information. Once a career choice is made, the individual must still select a training provider. At present, many applicants make that choice with a little or no reliable information. Under this bill, training providers will have to publicly report graduation rates, job placement and retention rates, and average earnings of graduates.

Because of the extensive information which will be available to each applicant, real consumer choice in the selection of a career and of a training provider will be possible. The legislation establishes individual training accounts for financially eligible participants so they can use to access career education and skill training programs. Men and women seeking training assistance will no longer be limited to a few predetermined options. As long as there are real job opportunities in the field selected and the training provider meets established performance standards, the individual will be free to choose which option best suits his or her needs.

An essential element of the new system is accountability. As I noted earlier, each training provider will have to monitor and report the job placement and retention achieved by its graduates and their average earnings. Only those training programs that meet an acceptable performance standard will remain eligible for receipt of public funds. The same principle of accountability is applied to those agencies administering state and local programs. The individual will be given a wide latitude to innovate under this legislation. But they too will be held accountable if their programs fail to meet challenging performance targets.

The rapid pace of technological change in the workplace has produced an alarming number of workers who have become dislocated in mid-career. The dislocation has been compounded by the increasing number of labor intensive production employers relocating their businesses abroad. This trend has been particularly acute in the manufacturing sector. We have a special obligation to these dislocated workers who have long dedicated their skills to the well being of their families. The Workforce Investment Act makes a commitment to them by maintaining a special dislocated worker program, supported by a separate funding stream, which is geared to their retraining needs. The current dislocated worker program currently assists approximately 50,000 dislocated workers nationwide in the most recent year. Of those who completed the program during that year, 71 percent were employed when they left the program, earning on average 93 percent of their previous wages. America’s dislocated workers have earned the right to assistance in developing new skills which will allow them to be full participants in the 21st century economy.

There is no challenge facing America today which is tougher or more important than providing at-risk, often out of school, youth with meaningful education and employment opportunities. Far too many of our teenagers are being left behind without the skills needed to survive in the 21st century economy. I am particularly pleased with the commitment which the Workforce Investment Partnership Act makes to these young men and women. This legislation authorizes a new initiative focused on teenagers living in poverty in communities offering them few constructive employment opportunities. Each year, the Secretary of Labor will award grants from a $250 million national fund to innovative programs designed to provide opportunities to youth living in these areas. The programs will emphasize mentoring, strong links between academic and worksite learning, and job placement and retention. It will encourage broad based community participation from local service agencies and area employers. These model programs will be evaluated, identify the techniques which are most effective in reaching those youth at greatest risk.

Another important program for young people who face the highest barriers to employment is the Job Corps. Most of the participants grow up in extreme poverty. Their educational opportunities are limited. Job Corps, at its best, moves them from deprivation to opportunity. But, for many of them, it is an extremely difficult transition. As a result, critics of the program are always able to point to failures. But for each failure, there are many stories of success. Job Corps is a program worth preserving and worth expanding too. Our legislation decisively rejects the view that Job Corps should be dismantled. Instead, it strengthens the program in several ways. It establishes closer ties between individual Job Corps Centers and the communities they serve. It ensures that training programs correspond with the area’s labor market needs. It extends follow-up counseling for participants up to 12 months and established detailed performance standards to hold programs accountable.

The legislation also provides for the continuation of summer jobs as an essential component of the Workforce Investment Act. For many young, summer jobs are their first opportunity to work and their first critical step in learning the work ethic. The summer jobs program also provides many youth with quality learning experiences to develop skills which will help them during the school year. Studies by the Department of Labor’s Office of the Inspector General and research by Westat, Inc. have reported positive findings regarding the program, concluding that these sites are well supervised and disciplined, that jobs provide useful work, that the education component teaches students new skills that they apply in school, and that students learn the value of work.

I believe that the summer jobs program needs to continue to be available on a significant scale with sufficient funding. This bill recognizes the critical importance of the summer youth program by requiring that it be a part of each local area's youth program and allowing local communities to determine the number of summer jobs to be created.

The Workforce Investment Act includes titles reauthorizing major vocational rehabilitation and adult literacy programs. Both programs will continue to be separately funded and independently administered. We have incorporated them in the Workforce Act because they must be integral components of any comprehensive strategy to prepare people to meet the demands of the 21st century workplace.

Vocational rehabilitation offers new hope to individuals with disabilities, allowing them to reach their full potential and actively participate in their communities. The Rehabilitation Title of the Act will ensure that all working-aged individuals with disabilities, even those with the most significant disabilities, have realistic opportunities to obtain the resources and skills they need to reach their employment goals.

Adult literacy programs are essential for the 27% of the adult population who...
have not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent. Learning to read and communicate effectively are the first steps to career advancement. This legislation will increase access to educational opportunities for those people most in need of assistance and enhance the quality of services provided.

The Workforce Investment Partnership Act will make it possible for millions of Americans to gain the skills needed to compete in a global economy. In doing so, we are also enabling them to realize their personal American dreams.

I would like to recognize the substantial contributions made by several individuals to this effort. On my staff, Jeffrey Tetz has worked on the development of the workforce and education titles of this bill for nearly eighteen months and done an outstanding job. Connie Garner has worked diligently on the vocational rehabilitation title. Jane Oates' assistance throughout the conference process has also been invaluable. I am proud of their work.

I also wish to recognize the dedicated service of my staff who have worked on the development of the bill. To them, I extend my thanks and appreciation.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I am pleased to join with my colleagues in support of the Workforce Investment Act Conference Report. This is a truly bipartisan bill. A true conferee, I would like to commend Senators JEFFORDS, KENNEDY, DEWINE, and WELLSTONE, as well as the House conferees, for shepherding this bill through the conference.

Few issues that we vote on in Congress are as important to the future of this country as the lifelong education and training of our workforce. We live in an era of a global economy, emerging industries, and company downsizing. It is imperative that our delivery of services meets the employment and educational needs of the 21st century.

The current maze of more than 160 federal programs which are administered by 15 separate federal agencies has failed. The Workforce Investment Act streamlines these programs by giving more authority to state and local representatives of government, business, labor, educational and community leaders. This bill establishes a true collaborative process between the state and local representatives to ensure that training and educational services will be held to high standards. This bill also gives more flexibility to individuals seeking training assistance. Individuals will no longer be limited to a predetermined set of services.

I am especially pleased that the cornerstone of the Workforce Investment Act is streamlined service delivery through one-stop career centers. My state of Connecticut is one of the states that is implementing this model of delivery. This act has delivered job training services in the state. I have the privilege of visiting many of these centers and can attest to their success.

While I applaud the new system of providing training assistance incorporated in this bill, I am pleased that the bill retains some direct federal involvement in order to ensure that disadvantaged youth, veterans and displaced workers receive the training assistance and support they need.

For many years, the Connecticut economy was dependent on defense-oriented industries. The Workforce Investment Act ensures that employees who are adversely affected by base closings and downsizing will have access to job training and supportive services in order to acquire the skills needed for employment in the technology-driven economy of the 21st century.

This legislation also provides for the coordination of adult education systems, allowing adult education to play a crucial role in a participant's professional training program. In the area of adult education and literacy, this legislation will help communities that demonstrate significant illiteracy rates to receive adult education programs as a first priority. I am pleased that this legislation also includes a provision that will direct funds designated to support English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to those ESL programs in communities with designated need. This means that ESL programs with waiting lists—those in communities with the greatest need for these services—will receive funds on a prioritized basis.

Mr. President, in order to better assist nonnative English speakers and fully assimilate them into our society, we must help them become more fluent in English. I can think of few more important factors in determining whether or not someone new to this society will successfully make this difficult transition than their ability to speak English. The current maze of more than 160 programs which are administered by 15 separate federal agencies has failed. The Workforce Investment Act streamlines these programs by giving more authority to state and local representatives of government, business, labor, educational and community leaders. This bill establishes a true collaborative process between the state and local representatives to ensure that training and educational services will be held to high standards. This bill also gives more flexibility to individuals seeking training assistance. Individuals will no longer be limited to a predetermined set of services.
Finally, Mr. President, I would again like to commend Senators Jeffords, DeWine, Kennedy, and Wellstone, as well as Chairman Goodling, Congressmen Clay, Kildee, and Martinez for the important role they each played in making this conference agreement a reality. They worked closely with myself and my staff to address numerous concerns and for that I would like to thank them.

Mr. Wellstone. Mr. President, I am extremely pleased we are about to pass this important conference report. I look forward to the Senate's confirmation of the agreement on the next step.

I have spoken on numerous occasions regarding the subject. As the Ranking Democrat on the Senate Labor Subcommittee on Employment and Training, I have worked hard with my colleagues Senator DeWine, Senator Jeffords and Senator Kennedy to help bring us to where we are this evening. I thank them and their staffs who have worked directly with me and my staff during the months of hearings, preparations, debate and drafting.

The conference bill preserves important policy principles contained in the Senate bill to help connect, streamline and decentralize our federal job training system. At the same time, it will make that system more accountable to real performance measures. It gives private sector employers—the people who have jobs to offer and who need workers with the right skills—a greater role in directing policy at the state and local level, which is where most decision-making power resides in this bill. The bill retains crucial federal priorities, then allows state and local authorities to decide how best to address their needs.

And to the contrary to where Minnesota and a number of other states have already moved decisively: to a system of One-Stop service centers where people can get all the information they need in one location. It will replace the currently over-bureaucratized systems in many states and localities with systems driven more by the needs of those who utilize them. Adults seeking training will receive Individual Training Accounts to give them direct control over their own careers. High quality labor market information will be accessible through the One-Stop, and training providers will be required to report publicly on their performance. Men and women will have the ability to make their own choices based on the best information about which profession they should pursue. The bill will address concerns about performance measures.

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Mr. Kennedy. Mr. President, I am extremely pleased we are about to pass this important conference report. I look forward to the Senate's confirmation of the agreement on the next step.

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